

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to the Figure 5. This sheet replaces the original sheet filed with the application. In Figure 5, reference numerals in error have been corrected and new reference numerals have been added. In addition, a top view portion and a cross-section portion of the Figure have been labeled.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

REMARKS

Amendments to the abstract, specification, claims, and drawings are presented herein. In particular, claims 1-3, 6-7 and 10-12 have been amended. Claims 1-12 remain in the application. Support for the amendments to the claims is identified herein below. No new matter has been added. This application has been carefully considered in connection with the Examiner's Action. Reconsideration, and allowance of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Drawings

The drawings were objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include reference characters 11a and 12a not mentioned in the description. With respect to reference numeral "11a", it is noted that support can be found in the specification on at least page 4, lines 7 and 24; and page 5, line 24. In Figure 5, reference numeral "12a" has been changed to "11a". Accordingly, objection to the drawings is now believed overcome.

Specification

The abstract of the disclosure was objected to because the language indicating alleged benefits, with the indication that correction is required. By this amendment, the Abstract has been amended to remove the language of alleged benefits. Accordingly, the objection is now believed overcome.

Claim Objections

Claims 1 and 6 were objected to because of informalities. By this amendment, claims 1 and 6 have been amended to correct the informalities indicated by the Examiner. Accordingly, the objection to claims 1 and 6 is now believed overcome.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claim 1 recites an interconnect apparatus comprising:

a wearable garment (2) having a body structure; and
at least one interconnect element (12) having a button hole opening (10) defined by an outer ring (11), the outer ring (11) having at least one electrically conductive contact portion (11a), wherein said interconnect element (12) is coupled to a fabric circuit (4) integrated in said garment (2) via the at least one electrically conductive contact portion (11a) of the outer ring (11).

Support for the amendments to claim 1 (similarly, for claims 2 and 11), can be found in the specification at least on page 4, lines 5-11, 20-27; page 5, lines 1-16.

Claims 1-4 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Banks (US 6,026,512). With respect to claim 1, Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for at least the following reasons.

The PTO provides in MPEP § 2131 that

"[t]o anticipate a claim, the reference must teach every element of the claim...."

Therefore, with respect to claim 1, to sustain this rejection the Banks reference must contain all of the above claimed elements of the respective claims. However, contrary to the examiner's position that all elements are disclosed in the Banks reference, the latter reference does not disclose an "interconnect element having a **button hole opening** defined by an **outer ring**, the outer ring having at least one electrically conductive contact portion, wherein said interconnect element is coupled to a fabric circuit integrated in said garment via the at least one electrically conductive contact portion of the outer ring" as is claimed in claim 1.

In contrast, while the static electricity dissipation garment of Banks teaches use of an electrical connector 66 formed by a male member 70 inserted within a female member 68 with sections of ribbons 60 or 64 ... tightly bound therebetween (See Banks at column 4, lines 45-49), Banks does not teach or suggest an “interconnect element having a **button hole opening** defined by an **outer ring**, the outer ring having at least one electrically conductive contact portion, wherein said interconnect element is coupled to a fabric circuit integrated in said garment via the at least one electrically conductive contact portion of the outer ring” as is claimed in claim 1 of the present application.

Therefore, the rejection is not supported by the Banks reference and should be withdrawn.

Accordingly, claim 1 is allowable and an early formal notice thereof is requested. Dependent claims 2-4 depend from and further limit independent claim 1 and therefore are allowable as well.

By this amendment, claim 11 has been amended in a similar manner with respect to the amendments to claim 1. Claim 11 further requires a *button connector*. Claim 11 is believed allowable over the Banks reference for reasons similar as stated herein above with respect to overcoming the rejection of claim 1. Accordingly, claim 11 is believed allowable and the rejection thereof should be withdrawn.

Claim 7 recites an interconnect apparatus comprising:

- a wearable garment (2) having a body structure;
- at least one interconnect element (12) having a button hole opening (10) defined by an outer ring (11), the outer ring (11) having at least one electrically

conductive contact portion (11a) coupled to a first fabric circuit (4) integrated in a first layer of said garment (2); and,

a button connecting element (20) having at least one electrically conductive contact portion (20a) coupled to a second fabric circuit (4) integrated in a second layer of said garment (2),

wherein said interconnect element (12) engages the button connecting element via a releasable locking action with button hole opening (10) defined by outer ring (11) so that the respective conductive contact portions (11a,20a) come in contact electrically.

Support for the amendments to claim 7 (similarly, for claim 12), can be found in the specification at least on page 4, lines 5-11, 20-27; page 5, lines 1-16.

Claims 7 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Taylor (US 2,287,915). With respect to claim 7, Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for at least the following reasons.

The PTO provides in MPEP § 2131 that

"[t]o anticipate a claim, the reference must teach every element of the claim...."

Therefore, with respect to claim 7, to sustain this rejection the Taylor reference must contain all of the above claimed elements of the respective claims. However, contrary to the examiner's position that all elements are disclosed in the Taylor reference, the latter reference does not disclose an "interconnect element having a **button hole opening** defined by an **outer ring**, the outer ring having at least one electrically conductive contact portion coupled to a first fabric circuit integrated in a first layer of said garment; and a **button connecting element** having at least one electrically conductive contact portion coupled to a second fabric circuit integrated in a

second layer of said garment" as is claimed in claim 7.

In contrast, while the electrically heated clothing of Taylor teaches use of studs for connection to external supply leads and press sockets (See Taylor at page 3, second column, lines 48-52, Taylor does not teach or suggest an "interconnect element having a **button hole opening** defined by an **outer ring**, the outer ring having at least one electrically conductive contact portion coupled to a first fabric circuit integrated in a first layer of said garment; and a **button connecting element** having at least one electrically conductive contact portion coupled to a second fabric circuit integrated in a second layer of said garment" as is claimed in claim 7 of the present application.

Therefore, the rejection is not supported by the Taylor reference and should be withdrawn.

Accordingly, claim 7 is allowable and an early formal notice thereof is requested.

By this amendment, claim 12 has been amended in a similar manner with respect the amendments to claim 7. Claim 12 is believed allowable over the Taylor reference for reasons similar as stated herein above with respect to overcoming the rejection of claim 7. Accordingly, claim 12 is believed allowable and the rejection thereof should be withdrawn.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Banks (US 6,026,512) as applied to claims 1-3 above, further in view of Allen (US 5,613,756). With respect to claim 5 Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for at least the following reasons. Claim 5 depends from and further limits allowable independent claim 1 and therefore is allowable as well.

Applicant notes that paragraph 11 of the office action states "Claims 6-7"; however, the comments that follow thereafter relate to claims 6 and 10. Accordingly, the undersigned believes the rejection in paragraph 11 of the office action to be with respect to claims 6 and 10.

Claims 6 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Banks (US 6,026,512) as applied to claims 1-2 above, further in view of Cover Sr. (US 2,285,083). With respect to claim 6 Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for at least the following reasons. Claim 6 depends from and further limits allowable independent claim 1 and therefore is allowable as well. With respect to claim 10 Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for at least the following reasons. Claim 10 depends from and further limits allowable independent claim 7 and therefore is allowable as well.

Claims 8-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Taylor (US 2,287,915) as applied to claim 7 above, further in view of Cover Sr. (US 2,285,083). With respect to claim 8-9, Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for at least the following reasons. Claims 8-9 depend from and further limits allowable independent claim 7 and therefore is allowable as well.

Conclusion

Except as indicated herein, the claims were not amended in order to address issues of patentability and Applicants respectfully reserve all rights they may have under the Doctrine of Equivalents. Applicants furthermore reserve their right to reintroduce subject matter deleted herein at a later time during the prosecution of this application or a continuation application.

It is clear from all of the foregoing that independent claims 1, 7, and 11-12 are in condition for allowance. Dependent claims 2-6 depend from and further limit independent claim 1, and therefore are allowable as well. Dependent claims 8-10 depend from and further limit independent claim 7, and therefore are allowable as well. The amendments herein are fully supported by the original specification and drawings as discussed herein; therefore, no new matter is introduced. An early formal notice of allowance of claims 1-12 is requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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